



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2005

No. 154

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 18, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Tomorrow is the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address.

Lord, Lincoln spoke of the "mystic chords of memory." He believed the revered dead make distinct demands on us, the living.

In honoring those who gave their lives to preserve the sacred union of this Nation and to uphold the emancipated freedom of all peoples, Lincoln said, "We take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

So at Gettysburg then, so again, now, we the living are obliged to be "highly resolved that the dead shall not have died in vain."

By Your grace, Lord, and only by fulfilling present obligations to strengthen national unity and assure equal justice, will we the living pay fitting tribute to "the honored dead." Each generation of Americans must see to it "that this Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom."

This must be our resolve, Lord, with Your help now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute speeches per side.

DEMOCRATS REFUSE TO SEE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about something that Democrats lately seem incapable of speaking about, and that is the progress that is being made in Iraq.

As of late last month, 210,400 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped. Thirty-six Army battalions and three combat support battalions are leading the fight in their areas, a 71 percent increase since March. More than 50,800 Iraqi police have completed the basic training course.

And, adding to that, the progress of the Iraqi people towards democracy has been tremendous. They are now hold-

ing free elections instead of the fake ones that Saddam Hussein forced on them for many years.

Yet, I do not hear many Democrats speak of this progress. All they talk about is how we are in a "quagmire" and that the war has been a "grotesque mistake."

Our men and women are not only fighting terrorists over in Iraq, but they are also setting up roads and schools. But Democrats would rather have us cut and run and, in the process, undo all the good work that has been done.

COURAGE OUTWEIGHS POLITICS

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the most significant day in the war in Iraq since we first began our attack. As President Bush is learning that our few allies are withdrawing their troops, Congressman JACK MURTHA has publicly concluded it is time to bring our troops home.

Despite attacks by some who never had a hint of his military service, whose own mismanagement, not just of the information that got us into this effort, but whose inept mismanagement of the war itself left us with few good options, JACK MURTHA remains the single most knowledgeable and respected Member of this House dealing with military affairs.

I have not seen eye-to-eye with JACK from the beginning, when I opposed attacking Iraq, to a statement I just posted, after weeks of thought, for a more gradual withdrawal. But I and every Member who is thinking honestly about this sad episode will reconsider my conclusion because of JACK MURTHA's courageous and heartfelt statement. He is the only Member of Congress who has earned the right to be listened to . . .

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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